

Native Community Action Council— Nuclear Risk Management For Native Communities

Native Community Action Council

P.O. Box 46301

Las Vegas, NV 89114

E-mail: dbgnewe@gmail.com

Agenda Item IX (HLRW)
Meeting Date: 06-03-16

Mission Statement

“To preserve traditional histories, rights and benefits for Native Americans of the Great Basin pursuant to tribal customs by understanding, educating and managing nuclear risks.”

Board of Directors 2013

- Margene Bullcreek, President, Skull Valley, UT. (Deceased)
- Corbin Harney (Deceased)
- Dolly Big Soldier (Deceased)
- Ian Zabarte, Vice-President, Duckwater, NV.
- Grace Goad, Secretary Treasurer, Death Valley, CA.
- Elanor Tom, Member, Cedar City, UT.
- Bennie Rielley, Member, Ely, NV.
- Laura Saunders, Member, Yomba, NV
- Maurice Frank, Member, Yomba, NV .,
- Heidi Blackeye, Member, Duckwater, NV
- Pauline Esteves, Member, Death Valley, CA.
- Angie Boland, Member, Death Valley, CA
- Dorena Martineau, Member, Cedar City, UT.
- Carmen Martineau, Member, Cedar City, UT

Advisor

- Peter Ford, Baker, NV (Deceased)

Organization

- The NCAC is a grassroots organization of Western Shoshone and Southern Paiute peoples brought together by a common need to address the adverse human health impacts known to be plausible from exposure to ionizing radiation in fallout released from the Nevada Test Site (NTS).
- The NCAC was organized in 1993 to investigate impacts affecting the land and people of the Western Shoshone and Southern Paiute.
- The NCAC operated as a project of another non-profit in collaboration with research scientists, the Nuclear Risk Management for Native Communities (NRMNC) project, received federal funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Health, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and private donors.
- The NRMNC project was expanded to include 13 Western Shoshone and Southern Paiute communities downwind from the NTS and in 2000 sought to formalize the organization's governing infrastructure by adopting formal articles of incorporation, non-profit incorporation in the State of Nevada and IRS 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The tools and products of the NCAC include:
 - a) Tribal community social and economic profiles;
 - b) Tribal community oral history;
 - c) Family health history;
 - d) GIS maps and relational data base;
 - e) Tribal community outreach, curriculum and education modules to explain what happened;
 - f) Training of trainers and first responders; and,
 - g) Transfer of technology to grassroots stakeholders.

RESEARCH FINDINGS – LESSONS LEARNED

- DOSE--Native American tribal communities receive substantially higher exposure than other Americans from US nuclear weapons testing (While no statistical significance can be determined to show a cause effect relationship between nuclear weapons testing and the onset of illness and disease, based upon lifestyle differences alone, Native American risk of exposure is 5-10 times greater for adults, 10-30 times greater newborns and as much as 60 times greater for in utero exposure).
- LIFESTYLE--The US Department of Energy (DOE) Off-Site Radiation Exposure Review Project findings did not model Native American lifestyle appropriately, substituting instead a Shepard lifestyle. No follow up on Native American tribal communities has been done by the DOE.
- COLLABORATION--Collaborative research that brings scientists and grassroots community together in the field where the impact effect is experienced can provide a valuable first hand observation of tribal life-ways that is appropriate context for understanding unique exposure pathways.
- EXPOSURE PATHWAYS--Because of the unique exposure pathways (lifestyle differences alone) calculations of possible dose estimates are significantly higher for Native Americans than non-Native Americans. Unique life-way exposure pathways include:
 - A) Diet: traditional food resources including rabbit, deer, and how the food prepared -- a greater varieties of foods and their more complete consumption contribute to errors in calculating dose. (See below human accumulation sites).
 - B) Resuspension of ionizing radiation include: Wood burning for heating homes and sweats, US Bureau of Land Management fire management techniques, desert dust storms and household deposition.

RESEARCH FINDINGS – LESSONS LEARNED, continued.

- PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION-- Tribal community outreach and education inform knowledge and protective behavior of exposure pathways and adsorption of radio-nuclides important to human health in different parts of the body include:
 - A) Cesium-137 in muscle;
 - B) Plutonium-239 (in particle form) stomach ingestion and lungs inhalation;
 - C) Radioactive Iodine-131 (mimicking natural Iodine) into the thyroid; and
 - D) Strontium 90 (mimicking calcium) in the bones.

RISK PERCEPTION

- Risk perception constructed by Native Americans stakeholders is significantly different than scientists working in isolation in far off universities and is socially constructed by events in the field and cumulative among members of tribal community who experience nuclear threats, hazards and adverse social, economic and health impact.
 - A) Standard effects are uniform for most types of events like traffic accidents (the individuals are provided emergency care, wreckage is removed, the site cleared, then repaired and the event ends).
 - B) Special effects are those related to stigma that nuclear technology brings enduring threat and hazard (While an event involving nuclear material may end, as in the accident scenario aforementioned, issues of how clean is clean and biological genetic damage may never end for some communities and individuals).
- Areas of application include the understanding of special effects that may affect victims of terrorism; victims of man made ecological abuse; victims of natural disaster; peoples uniquely vulnerable to stigma impacts because of size and lifestyle (Native American tribal community); and, impact vulnerable industries such as tourism and gaming (Indian) .

Organizational Priorities

HUMAN HEALTH

- Future hazards require tribal community awareness to threats and mitigation of potential impacts.
- Outreach and education are key activities in preparedness and early warning and avoidance of post traumatic stress syndrome. Insuring tribal communities have the tools for monitoring threats, health care providers must have the skills to identify exposure and inform leaders.
- Accounting for changes in community that are a result of nuclear technology developments are necessary for tribal community today. Communities need communication of options, health remedies.
- Activity in the areas of individual health screening for illness and broadening the list of primary cancers defined as adverse consequences in compensations legislation are areas of importance to many communities alike.

Organizational Priorities, continued.

RESUMPTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING

- The belief is that nuclear weapons testing has ended, sub-critical testing (essentially everything that goes into a full scale test) is conducted with less than the amount of plutonium necessary to achieve “criticality”. The results are then extrapolated out with the use of supercomputers. The data produced can be used for the development of new generations of nuclear weapons design, yield and weapons production techniques. At the same time, the cost for resumption of full scale nuclear weapons testing is maintained at full readiness.
- The Reliable Replacement Warhead program passed by congress is intended to allow for the replacement of existing warheads as long as they do not have any new military application or design. By using language that allows for component replacement in warheads many scientific uncertainties are created in effect requiring full scale testing of the nuclear weapon as a whole.

Organizational Priorities, continued.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

- The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, Amended in 1987 is in effect and requires licensing by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
- No further work can continue at the Yucca Mountain site until the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issues a construction authorization.
- In 2003 President Bush gave approval to the Yucca Mountain site overriding Nevada's veto.
- The Native Community Action Council has intervened and achieved "party with standing" status.
- In 2010 President Obama did not provide budget funding for the Yucca Mountain site.
- Licensing continues without funding.
- All licensing documents are available at: www.trackhearings.com

Organizational Priorities, continued.

NUCLEAR WASTE TRANSPORTATION

- There are 115 commercial US nuclear reactors at 75 sites in the continental US. In December 2005 the US Bureau of Land Management approved the DOE's land withdrawal extension consisting of a 1 mile wide by 300 mile long corridor between Caliente and Yucca Mountain. The withdrawal will prevent mining and disposal of the corridor lands for an additional period of ten years.
- The rail corridor passes through Western Shoshone and Southern Paiute aboriginal use lands. The nuclear waste stream will become a river as they enter the Great Basin with some 40,000 truck shipments or 15,000 rail shipments.
- While reactor sites will only bear the risk from shipments originating at their site, Native American tribal communities from Skull Valley to Yucca Mountain will bear the risk from all shipments from every reactor.

Organizational Priorities, continued.

- SKULL VALLEY PRIVATE FUEL STORAGE
- The Skull Valley Goshute Tribe is of Western Shoshone origin and the community of interest by Private Fuel Storage (nuclear utility waste disposal group) as the host for a Monitored Retrievable Storage site for their seven utilities.
- The Skull Valley tribal community has already participated in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Atomic Safety Licensing Board (ASLB) proceeding and has learned valuable lessons and knowledge that must be passed on to tribal communities around the Yucca Mountain site.
- The two sites are connected by transportation issues, tribal affiliation, land, air and water as part of the Great Basin ecosystem. What happens at either site can have an effect on the other.

Organizational Priorities, continued.

TENORM

- Defined as technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material.
- All coal contains uranium in varying levels below Environmental Protection Agency radiation standards.
- When coal is burned in coal fired power plants the uranium is concentrated then disposed of in a landfill. Coal ash blows in the wind and onto the reservation, into the tribal community area and residents homes.

How to Participate

- Become educated;
- Speak to your family and neighbors;
- Attend public meetings and workshops;
- Join the Native Community Action Council Board of Directors for your tribal community. Send your letter of interest to:

Native Community Action Council

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Organizational Priorities, continued.

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

- Executive Order 12898 signed by President Clinton in 1994 created new opportunities for public participation of minority and low-income, and subsistence lifestyle populations to address environmental justice issues.
- Until the implementation of Executive Order 12898, federal agencies were without specific direction to ensure that low-income and minority populations were considered or given fair treatment in the management of federal programs.
- Decisions about siting hazardous nuclear facilities are being made by scientific experts and government decision-makers without the benefit of tribal leadership input. In some cases the cloak of national security has forbidden the disclosure of knowledge about the very existence of isolated bases and hazardous nuclear facilities.
- The past policy placed a disproportionate burden upon these populations resulting in environmental consequences from the siting and operation of federal facilities, now commonly known as “environmental racism.”

Organizational Priorities, continued.

PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

- An important healing process and mitigation tool is preparedness planning. Protective behavior such as planning, impact assessment and impact mitigation are important activities that move individuals and native community from victimization to protective behavior – an active role of responsibility for protecting the tribe.
- The process of implementing protective behavior include;
 - impact assessment (tribal community social and economic profiles),
 - monitoring changes in community life over time for use in impact assessment,
 - tribal community health education, and
 - early warning systems to warn the community of threats and hazards from the testing of weapons of mass destruction (public address system, radio broadcast stations and warning sirens).
- The benefits from tribal communities protecting themselves can not be underestimated.
 - Tribal communities have greater benefit from technology transferred and maintained in the tribal community.
 - Tribal leadership have greater control and therefore confidence in their ability to actively protect themselves and have greater confidence in the purpose and use of data gathered about them.
 - Tribal communities have an understanding of the data, confidence in the data gathered and interpretation of the data with a tribal perspective, sensitivity and understanding.

Published Research

- The Assessment of Radiation Exposure in Native American Communities From Nuclear Weapons Testing In Nevada.
- Nuclear Risk Management For Native Communities Project Community-Based Fallout Exposure Assessment Program, GIS Data Layers.
- A Report on the Need and Feasibility of Further Study of Impacts of Nuclear Testing On Native Communities.
- Native American Risks From Nuclear Weapons Testing In Nevada Are Higher Than Risks To Euro Americans.